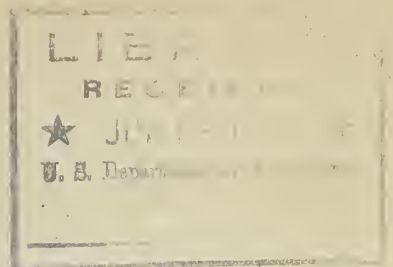


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THE HOMEMAKERS' PART IN THE CHILD  
HEALTH PROGRAM

A radio talk by Dr. Louise Stanley, chief of the Bureau of Home Economics, delivered in the Department period of the National Farm and Home Hour, Monday, May 4, 1936, and broadcast by NBC and 50 associated radio stations.

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The President declared May Day child health day. The Children's Bureau has asked all of us to join with them during this week to center attention on the needs for child health and protection and methods of meeting these needs. The problem is being discussed with parents the country over. Doctors, dentists, nutritionists, and nurses have all cooperated to make this program effective.

Today, I want to talk with you as homemakers and mothers, of the important part you must play in any child health program. The mother is the keystone that carries the weight of all child health activity. In our work at the bureau, which deals with problems of homemaking, we have tried to think through the problems in relation to children and help you with that important job. I have come over today, to review with you some of the helps the Bureau of Home Economics has to offer.

Food in proper kinds and amounts, we have been told many, many times, is basic to health. This is so important that repetition is justified. One division of our bureau is working on problems of food and certain of these problems are directly related to child nutrition. Detailed studies are undertaken to find out just what food nutrients children need for good nutrition and how much. Standards for the food nutrients are being established from calories to the last of the emerging vitamins and all between. But mothers want diets recommended in terms of foods, not protein and minerals and vitamins, so we translate the nutrient required into foods, per week, per day, per meal, and in different ways tell how these nutrients may be purchased in various forms in different parts of the country, and at different price levels.

Some want suggestions for preparation, for variety, for interest. Some want help in getting youngsters to eat what they should eat, so this side has been studied also. We keep a nutrition specialist at the National Child Research Center. She plans the meals, she studies what the children like and do not like and ways of teaching children to like what they should like. She discusses food problems with the mothers, makes occasional diet studies. The results of our studies on child feeding we publish in popular form and I should like to suggest to you particular two publications, Farmers' Bulletin 1674, "Food for Children," and Leaflet 42, "Good Food Habits for Children,"

One other study we have under way this year which I hope we may tell you more about later. It has been difficult in medical examinations to pick out the physical defects which are most directly related to inadequate or poorly balanced diet and so can be said to be a measure of the status of nutrition. Height and weight are used as rough measures but in the main are unsatisfactory. We have had an opportunity this spring to make such a study. A group of children has been given detailed physical examinations. They are being fed additional

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milk solids since we know milk is so important in the diet of children, and after six months another physical examination will be given. We believe that the difference between these two examinations is going to help us point out ways of determining by physical examination the results of inadequate amounts of milk solids in the diet. Getting enough milk is an important problem with many low income groups, and we are suggesting ways in which the fluid milk available may be supplemented with dried skim milk, which is less bulky, easily transported, and might be made available at lower prices than the fluid form.

Three usual results of poor nutrition are low resistance to infection, tiredness, and tooth decay. In most of these cases the doctor recommends diet changes to you, and for low resistance and tiredness, additional rest. We have not been able as yet to conquer tooth decay completely by diet, but results of better feeding show much less decay and some of us are sure that when we know enough and can start soon enough tooth decay can be controlled by wisely planned diets. So, as you have gone this past week to the doctor and the dentist for physical examinations, they have suggested, along with other corrective measures, better diet, and we are trying to help you carry out these recommendations.

Not only has it been your job this week to see that the child gets the necessary physical examination but to remember that these services are needed periodically. And you must also see that the recommendations given are carried out.

While our attention has been centered, this week, on the preschool child, I want to urge that you also stop and take stock of the needs of the physically active and rapidly growing pre-adolescents and adolescents. Their food demands are sometimes difficult for the less active and fully grown adult to comprehend. Mother may complain that Johnny's stomach has no bottom. But the food needs of this age group are important in both kinds and amounts, probably equally as important as during the preschool period.

I am also among those who think clothing is important to health. The bureau has studied designs for children's clothing, not only to simplify dressing and lessen the irritation dressing entails to both mother and child, but we have aimed to make clothing comfortable and hygienic. This means clothing that does not constrict, that is warm enough and not too warm. If you still make the youngsters' clothes we suggest that you write in for the recommendations for "Dresses for Little Girls" or "Suits for the Small Boy," as the case may be. Since summer is approaching you may be interested, in the outfits with open mesh tops to let the sun's rays shine on the child's body. If there is a baby in the family the designs for infants' clothes will be what you want.

If you are a rural mother the home demonstration agent in your county or the State extension service if your county has no agent will have special helps to offer. In some States the extension service is working with the health authorities in the establishment of child feeding clinics. In other States they are organizing groups for discussing child training problems and other problems in parent education.

More and more parents are asking questions that indicate the desire for help in solving problems of child training. Hand in hand with physical development must go emotional and intellectual growth if the child is to be a balanced individual. And this again brings responsibility to the home and parents. So, along with the physical protection of children, let's give consideration to protection from emotional and moral hazards which hamper all-around development. Let's broaden our program to cover not only physical measures to keep our children strong and well but add such measures as are needed to safeguard mental, moral, and emotional growth.

In any case, this week, to you is simply a reminder of the need for a check-up. Most communities have made this examination easy for you. But to carry out this program your job -- the mother's job -- continues 52 weeks in every year. We are ready to help you in any way we can.

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